How **Modern Managed Services** Help Organisations Prepare for a Fitter Future

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Foreword

In business, to be "fit" is to be resilient, and 2020 showed us how important it is to be prepared for change.

Change can be expected, or sudden, and organisations that emerge stronger as a result of change will be more resilient in the long run. 2021 will be all about performance, agility, and being fit enough to compete in a rapidly evolving business landscape.

If attention is quickly turning to what must be done to emerge stronger and thrive in a 'new normal' world, what steps need to be taken today to ensure your organisation can meet its business goals of the future?

While it is true some industries, such as airlines, are stuck in a difficult place through no fault of their own, other industries are emerging from the disruption of COVID-19 and growing in response to all the upheaval.

With the right approach to managed services, organisations can excel at their IT and operational needs while establishing a platform for innovation powered by cloud and digital.

At Tecala we have worked hard over many years to redefine the legacy outsourcing model and develop a modern, customer-centric managed service practice that enables our clients to be digital leaders.

And I'm proud of my team who have a passion for understanding and improving our clients' businesses.

Is your goal to become a fit organisation by 2022? Will you be positioned to take advantage of new growth opportunities even though the environment of uncertainty is likely to remain? Even if you don't have an answer to those questions right now, with the right technology partners by your side, you can prepare to modernise your business with a fresh approach to managed services.

Pieter DeGunst
Managing Director
of Tecala Group

Introduction

Most experienced IT and business leaders are familiar with cycles of boom and bust. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, showed that disruption can be devastating to certain industries and organisations that are not agile or able to adapt promptly.

According to research firm Gartner, "fragile" organisations are hit severely, or very severely, by disruption and emerge further behind "fit", or resilient, organisations who are better positioned for change. Resilient enterprises suffer the same business cycles; however, they managed to adapt and thrive afterward on the back of faster profit growth and new business models.

This report, How Modern Managed Services Help Organisations Prepare for a Fitter Future, investigates the 10 main attributes which set fit enterprises apart from their more fragile competitors, and outlines strategies to becoming a fitter organisation.

This guide will help you overcome the age-old disconnect between IT and the business. It outlines how to assess the effectiveness of your current Managed Services Provider (MSP) and determine whether they are providing the guidance and support your organisation requires, including:

- How to assess the capability and fitness of your organisation.
- Where MSPs can help you achieve your vision and develop a winning strategy.
- Develop the most effective way to future-proof your business with an MSP.
- How aligning technology with your business drivers and outcomes starts with the right strategy.
- Develop a strategic technology roadmap and relationship with an MSP to meet goals with more certainty and less risk.

Change is inevitable and innovation is only ever going to be of value if it's aligned with your specific objectives that are most likely unique to your industry.

According to Gartner research, more than half (53%) of fit organisations rank themselves as being effective at making technology an integral part of their business strategy. Of those surveyed, 52 per cent said they are confident in the clarity and effectiveness of their enterprise information management systems while 46 per cent said they are effective at aligning digital strategy and business strategy so they become one.

These results show how pivotal the alignment between technology and business strategy is. This then, is the real value of an effective MSP.

With the right partners, IT leaders can kick start cultural change, improve efficiency and create a strong path to an innovative future.

Shaping up to be a
fit organisation

As Gartner's research found, fit organisations consistently outperform their fragile counterparts in many key areas. This enables them to invest and maintain profit margins, while others shrink due to high operating costs and resistance to change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that in times of crisis, businesses had two options of response: cut costs and reduce investment, or invest for the future. Enterprises that respond by battening down the hatches are less able to fund business initiatives, attract the right talent, and achieve growth.

In contrast, fit enterprises take a different approach, becoming more effective after a crisis. They don't need unique skills or scarce resources, just excellence in 10 capabilities across three critical areas. These are:

Alignment

Even if the crisis doesn't revolve around technology, the solution often is to make the enterprise more deeply, strategically digital. For this reason, great business leadership that promotes dynamic alignment and reaches into the IT organization is key for fit enterprises.

Anticipation

Fit enterprises don't wait for circumstances to force a change in direction — leaders actively search out and act on emerging trends. Thus, anticipation is the second area that sets fit enterprises apart. In these organizations, IT plays a critical role in executing new business strategy.

Adaptability

IT leaders turn the IT organization into an instrument of change for the enterprise. They kick-start a culture change initiative within the IT organization that emphasizes a growth mindset and continuous learning.

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10 key **capabilities**

How does an organisation become fit? Start by reviewing the 10 key capabilities that set a fit organisation apart:

1. Strong leadership

Fitness starts at the top and must be led by the executive team. This will ensure an organisation wide commitment to the goals and what is required to reach them.

2. Disciplined IT investment decisions

You can't afford to be constantly distracted by the latest 'shiny new thing'. Guided by your MSP, investments must be strategic.

3. Communicating a clear vision

Employees at all levels must understand what the goal of becoming a fit organisation means and what their part is in achieving it.

4. Consistent business strategy

Reaching strategic goals requires a detailed strategic roadmap to guide decisions and progress. Establish this before work begins.

5. A strong CIO-CEO relationship

IT needs to be closely aligned with the business. To achieve this, fit organisations have a tight relationship between their CIO and CEO. It is a clear indication that IT is seen as a core enabler – not just a cost centre.

6. Using IT to gain competitive advantage

Technology involves far more than simply keeping the lights on. Determine ways it can be used to deliver a true competitive advantage.

7. Anticipating opportunities

The market is constantly evolving and opportunities to improve are appearing all the time. Fit organisations are ready for them and can respond in near real-time when they appear.

8. Take on risks for long-term growth

Fit organisations don't shy away from risk, but carefully assess it to determine whether the potential result is worth it.

9. Effectively navigating change

Change is a constant in todays business world. Fit organisations constantly review models and strategies to ensure they are aligned with the wider picture.

10. Fostering an IT culture

The integral part played by IT in fit organisations means there must be a culture that identifies business needs and the ability for IT to address them.

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Where **Managed Service Providers** can help

Technology is a primary enabler for an organisation to become "fit" and, sitting at the heart of every enterprise, IT powers the modern business world and is fundamental for both operational and new business success.

Yet, all too often, organisations experience a gap between business expectations and outcomes delivered by IT, even with significant investments in promising technologies.

In many cases, this disconnect can be traced to the organisation's relationship with their MSP. Rather than taking time to fully understand requirements and goals, a middling MSP simply takes a tactical approach to infrastructure management, resulting in less than spectacular outcomes.

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Start with
MSP alignment

How do you know if you are you getting the level of support you need from your MSP? Start by looking at how well matched your businesses really are.

If you've worked hard to align your IT strategy with your business outcomes to stay on the front foot in a highly volatile business environment, you'll need your MSP to be well aligned with your business to help action the strategy. Is this happening as planned? If not, there could be a couple of reasons.

Firstly, you might have already out-grown your MSP, in which case they're going to struggle to match your rapidly growing business needs. On the other hand, your MSP may be focussed on clients who are bigger or more important to them, in which case they are not supplying their best people to you. Either way, your business performance can suffer leaving you feeling unsupported and frustrated.

Every MSP will say that they will be your technology 'partner', but without the right approach and methodology, they're going to struggle to deliver on the promise. This is why Tecala invests the time, upfront, to understand your business, your industry, and the role IT needs to play to drive your performance and accelerate your growth.

Innovation is not a pitch,
it's a partnership

Your IT environment needs to be one of continuous innovation that ensures every part of the business is operating at peak performance. Yet, as good as innovation sounds when it is presented as a concept in a pitch, it is only ever going to be of true value if it's aligned with your specific business objectives and outcomes.

A good technology partner will be your partner for change across the entire business.

MSPs can help by becoming a partner that shares your purpose and values that fuel your growth. From consulting and advisory, to provision of a full array of managed services, a modern MSP will take a holistic view of your organisation and the opportunities for business improvement.

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Keeping **ahead of tech**
in an ever-changing world

An effective MSP will also help your organisation keep up with and evaluate the emerging technologies shaping the marketplace.

True partners don't just ensure operational stability, they help you keep ahead of trends and provide insight and guidance on how they can best add value to your organisation. Some overarching trends currently attracting attention are provided here:

Start with MSP alignment

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) has been growing in popularity for some years. The coming years will be when SaaS becomes the dominant method of software usage. Encouraged by the cost savings and improved flexibility it offers, organisations will embrace the strategy and migrate from legacy platforms.

Hyper-automation

This rapidly evolving trend involves organisations using new technologies to automate tasks that once required human judgement or action. In many cases, manual, paper-based workflows have been able to be replaced with automated alternatives. A key benefit of automation is that it allows organisations to scale up their operations without needing to employ more people. For this reason, it's likely that automation will become a key driver of increased profits and business scale.

More security awareness

It's a topic that is far from new, but IT security remains a top concern for businesses of all sizes. In 2021, awareness will increase even further among senior managers and boards. This will result in increasing investments in security platforms rather than point products. More budget will be allocated to IT security as managers come to recognise effective security is an evolutionary journey rather than a destination. The strategy of zero trust will also become more widely entrenched as more staff work remotely.

IT democratisation

The ongoing democratisation of IT involves putting powerful tools in the hands of staff with little or no technical expertise. Rather than them having to rely on a central IT department for support, they can adopt the tools and services they require to get their work done.

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Human augmentation

This area encompasses the use of technology to support a person's natural cognitive and physical abilities. This can include anything from staff wearing augmented reality safety goggles to the remote control of mining equipment.

Data access and transparency

The rise of artificial intelligence is causing challenges when it comes to explaining decisions and actions. Transparent data policies will become essential for effective decision-making.

Edge computing

The shift of compute resources from centralised locations to the edge of networks for specific workloads will continue to gain pace. This is important for organisations wanting to gain value from the 'Internet of Things' and data-intensive operations in remote locations.

Hybrid & distributed cloud

As cloud computing matures, the capabilities of public cloud services are spreading outside the provider's physical data centres. This will expedite the adoption of hybrid and multi-cloud architectures and drive further innovation. The perception that managing an IT infrastructure that comprises both on-premise and public cloud-based resources is too complex will disappear. A properly designed and managed hybrid cloud infrastructure can allow an organisation to meet both its service and security requirements in a cost-effective manner.

The enduring impact of COVID

The after effects of the pandemic will be felt throughout 2021. The 'anywhere working' strategy now widely in use will mature and become a mainstream method of operating. Organisations will take the time to review the new technologies, tools, and workflows they have in place and determine what additional changes need to be made. In many cases, the lasting legacy of COVID-19 will be stronger, more resilient business operations.

To be fit and agile, it is important to keep an eye on each of these trends to determine how they can be put into action in your organisation.

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How MSPs help achieve **effective alignment**

As well as monitoring IT trends and offering guidance and advice, a modern MSP should also help you achieve the five key capabilities of alignment needed to become a truly fit organisation. These are:

1 Great leadership

Your MSP can assist in ensuring your senior management is fully briefed on the future direction of your IT strategy and the anticipated benefits it will deliver.

2 Disciplined IT spending

With industry experience and knowledge, your MSP will predict and guide your investments to ensure they provide quantifiable results, including understanding the total cost of ownership.

3 Compelling vision

Nothing stands still and its vital to monitor new developments closely. Your MSP can ensure you don't miss significant business or technology changes. If you do not have an IT R&D team you can now expect your MSP to provide this as a core offering within the relationship.

4 Continuous strategy

Your initial strategy will, by necessity, change over time. Your MSP will ensure this remains tightly aligned to business goals.

5 Robust relationships

An effective MSP relationship will be a long-term relationship. You should be prepared to work together for an extended period to drive true value.

Alignment between business and technology has always been a challenge, but with the right MSP by your side, **the operational requirements of your business will become easier** and IT will an be enabler for innovation.

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Steps to building
a solid relationship

Having a solid and effective relationship with the right MSP is critical. It's the relationship between you and your provider that will guide everything from the creation of a strategic technology roadmap to the project-based steps required to reach your corporate goals.

At Tecala all roadmaps start with a thorough assessment of a client's tech capability. Why a technology capability assessment? Tecala is firmly aligned with our SME clients, which is where our strengths are, and this is where we spend all of our time.

We use our assessments to engage directly with you and your teams, and to measure how well your existing ICT solutions, services and platforms are meeting your business objectives. Only once we fully understand your business dynamics do we provide the solutions and long-term strategies you need to ensure your people and business can enjoy the very best experiences from your IT platforms, services and applications.

Here are eight key steps to establish an effective MSP relationship:

1. Identify the challenges

Establish the key pain points experienced when it comes to technology.

2. Assess the best delivery options

Generally speaking, strategy roles close to the business should remain internal while more operational functions benefit from being shifted to an MSP.

3. Estimate the benefits

Determine exactly how an MSP will add value and how that value will be measured.

4. Plant the seed

Talk with internal stakeholders and get their buy-in on the concept. Without this, any projects undertaken with an MSP are unlikely to succeed.

5. Talk up the opportunities

Be able to clearly explain the benefits that will be achieved by engaging with an MSP and building a solid relationship.

6. Present a business case

Identify any change requirements and assess the ROI to the whole business.

7. Develop a brief

Create a clear brief for your chosen MSP to ensure both parties are on the same page from the outset.

8. Assess progress

Once work has begun, undertake regular reviews to ensure outcomes are being realised within realistic timeframes.

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How Tecala can help

Regardless of whether you have an existing MSP relationship in place or would like to discuss the benefits of establishing one, Tecala is ready to help.

We can work with you to design a clear strategic roadmap that will allow you to use IT to gain a sustainable competitive advantage.

A strategic technology roadmap is one of the best ways to achieve technology-business alignment, but it is so often missing from the board room agenda.

The main benefits of a roadmap are better visibility between the customer and service providers and well-defined goals and a purpose, especially when reporting to management as there is a clear vision to show. Having a strategic roadmap can avoid making costly mistakes and it also considers technology advancements as it is a flexible document that can change.

What is the difference between an Strategic Technology Roadmap and a regular ICT strategy? The main difference is the entire business strategy and strategic ICT consulting is encapsulated in the roadmap. Client side, it allows them to see everything they need and their service provider can create one for them.

With budget timeframe dependencies and next actions clearly defined in the roadmap, it then becomes easy to write a business case on a program of work and apply for budget.

Our consulting and advisory team can also work with your senior management team to provide clear and effective leadership. Tecala delivers on our values:

- We believe that every organisation deserves to enjoy a brilliant outcome from their IT investments.

- We develop long-term proactive relationships with our clients to provide the strategic and operational advantage of high-end managed IT solutions while driving optimal technology utilisation, savings, and productivity

- Your MSP should be accelerating your growth and performance, not putting a handbrake on it. You should feel that technology partner is making the leading edge accessible.

- We believe the democratisation of IT should ensure your business is always able to innovate your IT environment and is operating at peak performance.

- We marry over two decades of experience with industry best practice with an eye on the latest innovations to ensure the right fit, right size, every time.

If your goal is to become a truly 'fit' organisation, we're ready to help. In a preliminary session with one of our senior consultants, we can begin to explore your requirements and outline how our industry knowledge and experience could assist.

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Let's talk
about Tecala

We are Tecala, a provider of innovative, enterprise-class ICT solutions.

We offer a comprehensive range of products and services to best enable your organisation to achieve its goals through the optimal utilisation of tried-and-tested technology.

Tecala offers consulting, project management, integration and management expertise. We position ourselves as your technology partner – our flexible engagement model gives you the scope to focus on your ICT strategic initiatives whilst reducing your operating costs.

We provide cloud and managed services; ICT and communications solutions, along with strategic consulting, all to maximize your ICT potential.

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Good Conversations
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